

March 3, 1983

Chambers noted, Senator Pirsch commented on the history of the most recent change when Douglas County, when the Legislature said Douglas County shall go from a district election to an at large election, the reasoning behind that change was the fact that the county board in district elections had malapportioned the districts and they did that in the 1960s. The United States Supreme Court case of Baker vs. Carr was decided in 1963, that was the one person, one vote case and only after that case came into being and was fully implemented were districts no longer...could districts no longer be malapportioned. If you will look at your own statute books you will see that this Nebraska Legislature had to be redistricted. The case was Exon vs. Tiemann filed in 1967 and the purpose was to get this Legislature to clean up its own act and that is the only reason we went to at large elections in Douglas County was because the county board wouldn't clean up its act in terms of drawing the lines. It wouldn't comport with the United States Supreme Court decision. Now it always sounds attractive to put issues to the people. It always sounds like that is the thing we should do because if we don't do it somehow we disenfranchise the people. If that be attractive let's put our tax issues to the people. Let the people decide the sales tax rate. Let the people decide the income tax rate. Let the people decide whether we will continue to exempt certain taxpayers from any tax whatsoever. Let's put them to the people. But we don't put them to the people. We don't put them to the people because we are a representative government and a representative government means simply that elected decision makers make the decisions and we make the decisions. County board is a creature of the State of Nebraska. The county board simply carries out state functions at a local level. It is our creature and all we are doing is we are saying that our creature in Douglas County needs to be changed, it needs to be changed to assure everyone in Douglas County that they have an equal opportunity for full and fair access to a political system and that is what Senator Chambers is talking about. And when you and I, as representative government, know that there is a wrong going on, it behooves us to correct that wrong because that is the function of representative decision makers. It is for that reason the amendment itself ought not carry.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Goll, but before I call on you, I would like to do something so that I may continue. While the Legislature is in session and capable of transacting business, I propose to sign and do sign LB 53, 72, 75, 98, 107, 110, 135, 145, 185, 208, 238, 298, 301, 382, 383, 417, 421, 522 and LR 24. (See page 757 of the Legislative Journal.) Senator Goll.

SENATOR GOLL: Mr. Speaker, I was going to address this